

Woodstock Board of Finance Minutes

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Town Hall Room 1

7:00 pm

1. **Call to order:** Chairman Michael Dougherty called meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed newly elected members to the Board of Finance.
2. **Roll Call**
 - a. **Members Present:** Michael Dougherty (Chairman)
David Fortin
Fred Chmura
Philip Parizeau
Michele Woz
Jeffery Kelleher
Marilyn Barker, Alternate
Asa Scranton, Alternate
Members absent: Julie Marcotte, Alternate is excused
 - b. **Others Present:** First Selectman Jay Swan, Finance Director Karen Fitzpatrick, Selectwoman Kate McDonald, Woodstock Public Schools Business Manager Janice Thurlow, Jessica Weaver Boose, Dotti Durst, Wendy Costa, Charlene Perkins Cutler, Glen Lessig, Su Connor, Melissa Jamison, Ray & Pam Morgan, Suzanne Woodward, Sonia Greene and Recording Secretary Amy Monahan.
 - c. **Noted for the Record:** Quorum
3. **Seat Alternate if Necessary:**
 - a. N/A
4. **Approve Minutes from the Regular October 10, 2023 Meeting**
 - a. Michele Woz made a ***Motion** to approve minutes from the Regular October 10, 2023 Meeting as amended. ***Seconded** by Fred Chmura. ***The motion passed** with one abstaining (Kelleher).
 - i. Janice Thurlow clarified the following information needed to be added to agenda item 6.d.iii
 1. General ledger budget numbers were changed on recommendation of the auditors for the financial reports provided.
5. **Public Comment**
 - a. None
6. **Old Business**
 - a. Update on State
 - i. Karen Fitzpatrick noted that first portion of the Education Cost Share Grant (ECS Grant) payment has been received in the amount of \$1,247,633. There may be a potential surplus amount of \$113,825 resulting from this program based on the current quarterly payment numbers.
 - ii. The Town of Woodstock has received Revenue Share Grant funds in the amount of \$208,191.81 will go into surplus for next year's budget.
 - b. Update on Local Bridge Project
 - i. Jay Swan noted that 6 bids were received for Peake Brooke bridge work ranging from \$950,000 to \$1.3 million. Those bids have been sent to the engineer for review.

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- ii. An email was sent to landowner to obtain required signatures for the easement needed to begin work on County Road.
- c. Update on American Rescue Plan Act
 - i. The ARPA funds report ending October 31, 2023 has been distributed to the Board of Finance members for review. Additional interest has been received and \$77,988 is the current balance of unassigned ARPA funds.
 - ii. Auditors are getting ready to prepare financials of the full audit due to the amount spent by the town of the ARPA funding.
- d. BOE QTR Reports ending 6/30/23
 - i. Janice Thurlow has distributed the report to the Board for review as requested. Transfers are reflected on the last page of this report.
 - 1. It was recommended to note the specific uses of transferred funding on future reports (in the form of an additional note at bottom of report would be adequate).
- e. WES Tunnel Encapsulation Update
 - i. Janice Thurlow shared that a second air quality reading was done at Woodstock Elementary School and there was no change since the initial air quality reading. The next step is to bring in a consultant to discuss feasibility and next steps for the project.

7. New Business

- a. FY 24 BOE Budget Update
 - i. Janice Thurlow stated that there are huge variances in the Special Education budgets compared to budgeted numbers as discussed previously. She will continue to watch those expenditures.
 - ii. Excess Cost Revenue are based on last year's numbers and reviewed by auditors. The Excess Cost Revenue number may be adjusted in April.
- b. FY 24 General Government Budget Update
 - i. Karen Fitzpatrick again stated that land use department will be over budget due to staffing needs. The current firm working as the Zoning Enforcement Officer for the Town of Woodstock is not willing to take on additional workload at this time and there is a shortage of qualified land use professionals.
 - 1. Michele Woz suggested that the area work with QVCC to create a program in the municipal job fields to assist in the lack of qualified persons to fill municipal jobs. Fred Chmura noted that many state classes are not offered in our area of the state.
- c. ADHOC Committee Presentation
 - i. Michele Woz noted that the committee held 5 productive meetings to find more information on questions raised by the public at forums in the last year. The committee was not able to tackle all topics but did discuss special taxing districts, tax relief programs and potential revenue expansion.
 - 1. Fred Chmura disagrees with statement made about administrative costs to operate special tax district. He would like the committee to re-examine this topic and offered to participate in the future conversation.
 - 2. Karen Fitzpatrick and Jay Swan referred to Asset limited income ALICE relief. Michele noted that any additional relief that is not state mandated would have to be advocated with state representatives/legislators.
 - ii. The document created is a working document that will change over time. Most of the content is not in the purview of the Board of Finance but the committee did find researching the possibilities a valuable starting point.
 - iii. The following recommendations were some made by the committee
 - 1. Bring Local Tax Freeze for the Elderly to Town Meeting

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2. Create Town Facilities Committee
3. Personal Property Tax Amnesty Program for use by the Assessor
4. Public Land Evaluations
- iv. Mike Dougherty made a ***Motion** that the Board of Finance pass on the recommendations of the AD HOC committee to the Board of Selectmen and authorize the publication of the document on the Town Website. ***Seconded** by Jeff Kelleher. ***The motion passed unanimously.**
 1. It was recommended that the document have a survey created where the public can agree or disagree with topics accompany the document online.
- d. QTR Reports ending 9/30/23
 - i. General Government- There was a correction made to an insurance line item (page 3, insurance liability is not overbudget).
 - ii. BOE- Janice Thurlow noted that Elementary and Middle School expenditures will be combined for reporting purposes in the future.
- e. Review Draft of 2024 BOF Meeting Schedule
 - i. A draft of proposed 2024 meeting dates was distributed to Board of Finance member for review.
 1. Dave Fortin made a ***Motion** to approve the proposed meeting dates as presented. ***Seconded** by Fred Chmura. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

8. Public Comment

- a. Wendy Costa thanked the AD HOC Committee for all the work that they have put into the project. She would like to see senior tax relief for seniors move forward in Woodstock.
- b. Suzanne Woodward asked if fire district taxes are the same rate per household. Michael Dougherty noted that district tax rates are based on mil rates.
- c. Glen Lessig thanked the BOF and all who have listened to concerns heard earlier this year.

9. Other From Board

- a. None

10. Correspondence & Announcements

- a. The Board of Finance will next meet Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 7 pm.

11. Adjournment

- a. Michele Woz made a ***Motion to Adjourn**. ***Seconded** by Phil Parizeau. ***The Motion Passed Unanimously.** Meeting Adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary. DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Finance. Please refer to next month's meeting for approval/amendments.